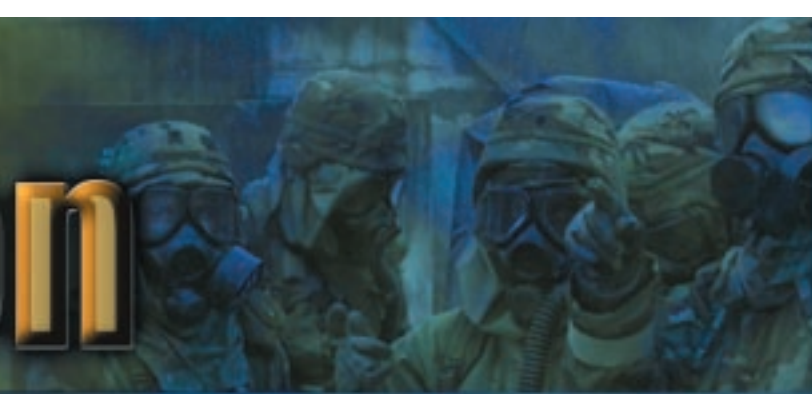


America's Tank Division



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In this issue...

- 2-37 AR gets gassed.....8
- 47th FSB gives eye care in Kosovo..12
- 501st MI 1st. Sgt. lifts to victory.....14
- Man on the street.....4
- Gen. (Ret.) Frederick Franks visits Kosovo5
- 69th Chem. upgrades equipment.....11



A 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment soldier crouches down to perform security Overwatch while on patrol near Checkpoint Sapper. *Photo by Pvt. Benjamin Z. Etzioni*

Division Command Sgt. Maj. commends the development of junior NCOs



Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth O. Preston

Having watched the development of junior noncommissioned officers over the last 9 months as part of Task Force 2A and 2B, senior leaders throughout the division can be proud of the learning and development that has taken place.

Kosovo is truly a laboratory for leadership development in the truest

sense. Sergeants on this deployment, are fully committed with their soldiers to the mission everyday, for 6 months. These young leaders live the attributes of Sergeant Morales.

They share and endure the same hardships as their soldiers. From the long hours of work, to the lengthy patrols along a rugged border or crowded city, to guarding a church or school, sergeants gain 3 years of experience in 6 months.

These future senior leaders have the unique opportunity to see the principles of leadership at work. They fully appreciate the communication and motivation skills they have gained, that influence their soldiers to accomplish any mission.

For those who have lived the Kosovo experience, these deployed peacekeepers will tell you just how busy the operational tempo was for every

soldier doing the mission.

Leaders at all levels stay fully engaged with their own areas of responsibility, putting full leadership responsibility on their most junior leaders.

What does full-leadership responsibility really mean? Sergeants serving in team and squad leader level positions, conduct real world patrols with their soldiers throughout Kosovo. Sergeants are responsible for conducting to standard, the preparation, pre-combat checks, and rehearsals for their team of soldiers. That is how we grow leaders in the Army; establish tough standards, empower our junior leaders, and hold them accountable.

How well do these young leaders perform? Magnificent, amazing, wonderful, and terrific; these are only a few of the words used by many visiting senior leaders, congressmen and anyone who wants to see first hand, what the mission in Kosovo is all about.

All of these visitors depart Kosovo with a full appreciation of what it means to be a sergeant and the level of responsibility placed on their shoulders. Just as noncommissioned officers have earned the reputation as the "Backbone of the Army," these sergeants in Kosovo are truly the "Backbone of Task Force Falcon."

IRON SOLDIERS!